

SAYS SHE KILLED 31 PERSONS.

CONFESSION OF JANE TOPPAN, THE POISONING NURSE.

She gives a list of Her Victims to Her Counsel—Knew She Was Doing Wrong but Felt No Remorse—Sometimes She Tried to Save Her Patients After She Had Administered the Fatal Dose.

BALTIMORE, Md., June 24.—Not since the days of Lucretia Borgia and other noble poisoners of the Middle Ages has there been one known to equal Jane Toppan, who was locked up to-day in the Taunton Insane Asylum for poisoning Mrs. M. W. Gibbs at Catumet last August. By her own confession this nurse has killed thirty-one persons, where she could not gratify her desire for killing and burning from the physicians and other persons who murdered with morphine and atropine and others with poisons which she cannot remember. When not gratifying her passion by killing people she set fire to the houses where she was a guest or was employed in a professional capacity.

Miss Toppan told the alienist that she knew she was too dangerous a woman to be at liberty and was glad that the authorities had placed her where she could not gratify her desire for killing and burning from the physicians and other persons who murdered with morphine and atropine and others with poisons which she cannot remember. When not gratifying her passion by killing people she set fire to the houses where she was a guest or was employed in a professional capacity.

When Judge Bixby, Miss Toppan's senior counsel, first visited her she told him her dreadful story without eliminating any of the revolting details and named the thirty-one persons whom she had killed. She seemed to gloat over her success in killing from the physicians and other persons who murdered with morphine and atropine and others with poisons which she cannot remember. When not gratifying her passion by killing people she set fire to the houses where she was a guest or was employed in a professional capacity.

Then she told Mrs. Davis had called upon her at Cambridge last June to collect a note. She said that she was seized with a passion to kill, a recurrence of the oft-repeated influence. In this state she gave morphine to Mrs. Davis, the old woman, who recovered, but before she was well enough to leave her home at Catumet, Miss Toppan was invited to try again, and this time she followed the injection of diluted morphine and atropine.

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She spoke of the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Israel P. Dunham at Cambridge, the husband and the wife in 1907. Her counsel had read an interview with the physician who had attended these people, in which the doctor said that both had died from natural causes. There were no suspicious circumstances, no evidence of poison having been given.

"He is wrong," promptly said Miss Toppan. "There was nothing suspicious about the death—that is, nobody thought so. But I poisoned them both."

She went back over the preceding years and mentioned the names of the others whose lives she had taken.

"There were thirty-one in all," she said, and then she repeated the names, counting them on her fingers to be sure that she had not omitted one from the list. Miss Toppan said she had heard of no question by any doctor that she had not carried out his instructions to the best of her ability, and that she had not shown professional enthusiasm and faithfulness. The same doctors, she said, had engaged her in subsequent cases.

"How did you kill them?" she was asked.

"I gave them doses of morphine and atropine tablets in mineral water and sometimes in a dilution of whiskey," she replied. "Then I also used injections, just as I did at Catumet."

"I do not remember how I killed them all, but I know that I recall were poisoned with morphine and atropine. My memory is not very good. I forget some things. I used morphine and atropine because those are vegetable poisons and can hardly be detected even before death. After death it is difficult, you know, to find other drugs."

The lawyer said: "Miss Toppan, you must be insane."

"Insane?" she replied. "How can I be insane? When I killed those people I knew that I was doing wrong. I was perfectly conscious that what I was doing was not right. I never at any time failed to realize what I was doing. Now how can a person be insane who realizes what she is doing and who is conscious of the fact that she is not doing right? Insanity is complete lack of any feeling of responsibility, isn't it?"

"Yes," said the lawyer, "that is so. But you have no remorse, have you?"

"No," declared the nurse. "I have absolutely no remorse. I have never felt sorry for what I have done. Even when I poisoned my dear friends, as the Davises were, I did not feel any regret afterward. I do not feel any remorse now. I have thought of all over, and I cannot detect the slightest bit of sorrow over what I have done."

"There must be something the matter with you, if you have no remorse," said the lawyer. "You cannot be right if you are not remorseful, after what you have told me."

"That is so," replied the prisoner. "I suppose that must show that I am insane. There is one other thing that makes me sometimes think my mind is not right. I have great difficulty in remembering things. My memory is very good at times, but on other occasions I cannot recall what I have said or done."

Upon successive visits of her counsel Miss Toppan added details to the narrative of crime. She supplied no additional names.

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It will be virtually a contract to be entered into between the city and the company whereby the company will improve and extend its service in consideration of an enlarged franchise. The company will put into operation not later than July 1, 1903, between the Battery and St. George, four double-ended twin-screw boats having a speed of not less than eighteen miles an hour. The Garrett and the Castleton will be rebuilt and fitted with new machinery and the company has agreed to build two new boats. With these four boats the company will be able to maintain a day and night service on a much shorter running schedule.

The plan provides for establishing a second ferry service between the Battery and Mott Island. The Southfield, Westfield and Mott Island will ply between the Battery and Mott Island and Clifton. To accommodate this new service the slip at the foot of Whitehall street now used by the Communipaw Ferry Company will be taken. A new slip for the Communipaw boats will be provided a little further up the river.

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BOOKS AND BOOKMAKING.

CURRENTLY OR INCOMPLETE—TIME WILL SHOW WHICH OF THE PUBLISHERS HAVE DRAWN FROM THIS SEASON'S BOOK BUSINESS THE INFERENCES THAT THE DAY OF THE TREMENDOUSLY SELLING NOVEL IS OVER.

Not again, they say, will the quarter-of-a-million-a-year mark be reached.

Conditions have changed. There is too much fiction that is bidding for a wide popularity on the market for any one book to reach the enormous figures which have astonished the reading public in the past ten years.

The round hundred thousand will be a good mark to aim at. Few books will attain it, very few surpass it. That one which reaches 100,000 copies will probably tower in lofty eminence.

So figures the book trade, and this is why. In the season just ending there appeared two novels by writers whose former efforts went beyond the 200,000 mark. There was every reason to suppose that with the prestige of former glory the new works would outstrip their predecessors.

One of these novels sold more than 100,000 copies before the day of publication. The sale went gradually, very gradually, up to 150,000, and is not likely to go far beyond that mark.

The other, more explosively exhibited than any other work of the season, has barely gone above the 50,000 mark, and will probably never reach a total of 100,000 copies sold. With such books as these falling far short of the expected success, which are being violently shoved into popular notice each season, the book experts see little hope of future heavy sales for individual books.

From this it must not be supposed, however, that the book business has not been profitable this season. The lack of tremendously heavy sales has meant the scattering of the same money over many books, and a fair success in an unprecedented number of publications.

Most of the well-established publishing firms have had an excellent season. Two of the smaller ones which plunged in the hope of a phenomenal success are said to be on the verge of bankruptcy, and one house with a comparatively strong list of books is in dubious case. These are likely to be the only casualties in an otherwise encouraging spring season.

Hail to Webster Davis! The intrepid champion of the Biers turns out to be the champion in another field. Hats off, ye authors! Here's the man of the day in your line.

Mr. Davis has made \$100,000 out of his book on the Beer war and intrigues of Great Britain. He says so himself. Is there another man in America who has made \$100,000 from a first effort, or a half of that, with the exception, possibly, of one or two novelists?

And this is a serious book, mind you. No languishing heroines, or cavalier heroes, no glamour of romance or soft, sweet murmurings of "Gadzooks!" or "S death," or other street-fair cries done into old English while you wait to lend it a mere trifling gift.

No, it is a deadly, downright earnest, and it has made \$100,000 for its lucky author! Webster Davis is the author; he ought to know, and he says so himself.

That would mean probably 600,000 copies sold. Yet Mr. Davis's book hasn't been on the list of heavy sellers—doubtless an Anglo-American conspiracy. His picture has seldom delighted the eye in bookstores' windows. Why is this? Perhaps the opulent publishers—they must be opulent, having sold nearly a million copies of the Webster Davis book—will tell. Or, perhaps, it's a trade secret. Or perhaps—horrid thought!—there's an African (not necessarily a South African) among the pickets and Mr. Davis isn't the champion author of the year, after all—only the champion something else.

To the illustrator the present book boom has been a veritable gold mine. Many artists who previously were not illustrators have benefited by it, too, for they have hastened to take up this line of work and get a share of the profits.

There is enough to do for all the competent ones, more than enough, in fact, for "of the making of books there is no end," as the sage wearily observed, and the public seems to have decreed that most of them shall be embellished with pictures.

There are fads and fashions in illustrating, too, and lucky is the artist on whom the floating halo of popularity is set. He is at the rainbow's end, the pot of gold lies open to his eager fingers.

Perhaps he should not be too harshly blamed if he has haste to garner the riches of his good fortune; his work grows slack and careless. There is more than one of the present little tin gods of illustration whose work needs the palliation of this or some other excuse.

For the most part, however, the men most in demand as illustrators of fiction are those whose work is artistically the best and the most conscientious. And their charges, though a publisher's pretty penny, are not exorbitant. One hundred, \$150, even \$200 a drawing for black-and-whites are not unusual charges, with an occasional \$250 for a more specially difficult bit of work. And in many cases the artist sells only the right to reproduce, he keeps the original himself.

It is said that the illustrator of one of this season's popular novels received \$250 apiece for his drawings. There were eight of them, so he took \$2,000 for pictures alone. James McNeill, the superintendent of the building, the operator and a young woman were on the car. None of them was hurt.

Two men were hurt by the falling of a freight elevator at the Friendschaft Clubhouse, Seventy-second street and Park avenue, yesterday afternoon. The elevator was operated from the basement and no one was supposed to ride on it.

During the ride on the elevator, Bonstard and Robert Meyer, porters at the club, after loading the elevator at the second floor got on to ride down. The rope snapped and the elevator fell to the bottom of the shaft.

Myer's leg was broken and Bonstard received a fractured skull and a broken arm. He was taken to the Presbyterian Hospital and may die.

The electric controller on one of the elevators in the Dan Building, 200 Broadway, got out of gear yesterday afternoon, when the car which was on the way down at the normal speed till it reached the bottom of the shaft, where it bumped against a steel stanchion with sufficient force to break the glass on one of the electric lights.

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And this is a serious book, mind you. No languishing heroines, or cavalier heroes, no glamour of romance or soft, sweet murmurings of "Gadzooks!" or "S death," or other street-fair cries done into old English while you wait to lend it a mere trifling gift.

No, it is a deadly, downright earnest, and it has made \$100,000 for its lucky author! Webster Davis is the author; he ought to know, and he says so himself.

That would mean probably 600,000 copies sold. Yet Mr. Davis's book hasn't been on the list of heavy sellers—doubtless an Anglo-American conspiracy. His picture has seldom delighted the eye in bookstores' windows. Why is this? Perhaps the opulent publishers—they must be opulent, having sold nearly a million copies of the Webster Davis book—will tell. Or, perhaps, it's a trade secret. Or perhaps—horrid thought!—there's an African (not necessarily a South African) among the pickets and Mr. Davis isn't the champion author of the year, after all—only the champion something else.

To the illustrator the present book boom has been a veritable gold mine. Many artists who previously were not illustrators have benefited by it, too, for they have hastened to take up this line of work and get a share of the profits.

There is enough to do for all the competent ones, more than enough, in fact, for "of the making of books there is no end," as the sage wearily observed, and the public seems to have decreed that most of them shall be embellished with pictures.

There are fads and fashions in illustrating, too, and lucky is the artist on whom the floating halo of popularity is set. He is at the rainbow's end, the pot of gold lies open to his eager fingers.